

REMARKS

The claims have been amended as to form, and also to sharpen their definition of the invention relative to the prior art.

Reconsideration is accordingly respectfully requested, for the rejection of the claims as anticipated by SHILEY.

SHILEY concerns a construction with an outer ring and inner ring. In between those rings the pins are arranged in such manner that when the rings are rotated with respect to each other, the pins are bent in curves and pushed outward to extend from the outer ring. Inherently to the two rotating rings and pins in between, this SHILEY construction is bulky, especially it has a large radial thickness.

In the field of heart valve prosthesis, it is of extreme importance to provide a valve lumen which is as large as possible in order to have a large cross section for allowing blood to pass. Taking into account that the maximum space available at the location of the natural heart valve (to be replaced) is limited and determined by the old natural heart valve, this means that the SHILEY construction restricts the blood flow through the assembly considerably.

According to the present invention, the arms and pins lie, in the insertion position, inside the lumen (i.e. the free internal space bounded between the inner surface of the tubular element) defined by the tubular element so that the radial

thickness of the wall of the tubular element does not need to accommodate the arms and pins in the insertion position. This allows a substantial reduction of the radial thickness occupied by the tubular element, meaning that a larger cross section for allowing blood to pass becomes available.

According to new claim 122, the tubular element is provided with slit-shaped radial passages, which are located alongside the arms and extend in the longitudinal direction of the arms. The passages thus overlap with the arms, which allow the arms to lie in the fixing position (i.e. mounted in the human body) in the passages (see, for example, Figures 15b, 16b, 17b, 20b of the present application). In the inserted position, the arms thus do not occupy space which would reduce the cross section available for the passage of blood.

Concerning the new claims, the prosthesis fixing device being made from one part as an integral whole provides a minimum of parts which additionally aids in reducing the dimensions of the tubular element and thus increases the cross section available for the passage of blood.

As the claims thus amended clearly bring out these distinctions with ample particularity, it is believed that they are all patentable, and reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any

overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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